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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000123

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SUBJECT: (U) NEW KIRKUK KURDISH POLITICAL COMMITTEE DISCUSSES ARTICLE
140

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REASON: 1.4 (a), (d)

¶1. (C) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: IPAO on June 26 met with
leaders
representing local Kurdish parties who recently set aside
differences to
push implementation of Article 140. Kurdish representatives
universally
agreed that Baghdad must implement Article 140 immediately or
risk
discredit among the Kurdish people and the Kurdistan Alliance.
In
addition, they agreed Baghdad must expedite funds to rebuild
Kirkuk's
infrastructure. Attending the meeting were the Kurdistan
Democratic
Party (KDP), Kurdistan Toilers Party (KTP), Kurdistan Social
Democratic
Party (KSDP), Kurdistan Communist Party (KCP), Kurdistan Islamic
Union
(KIU), and the Kurdistan Islamic Gathering (KIG). The Patriotic
Union
of Kurdistan representative was scheduled to participate but was
unable
to attend. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

(C) LACKING COORDINATION WITH BAGHDAD

¶2. (C) IPAO on 26 June 2006 met with a recently formed committee
comprised of the main Kurdish parties in Kirkuk. These leaders
have set
aside their political differences to express a unified Kurdish
voice on
implementation of Article 140. All representatives at the
meeting
asserted there is no coordination with the central government on
this
issue, and that lack of action from Baghdad is preventing the
Kirkuk
Provincial Council from correcting fundamental problems the city
faces,
such as rampant unemployment, Internally Displaced Persons
(IDPs), and
insufficient electricity and water services. Goran Jalal (KTP)
noted
that over half of the police in Kirkuk are receiving their
salaries from
the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) because Baghdad does not
come
through with the required funds. According to KDP
representative, Adnan

Kirkuki, the federal government has made no moves to reconstruct the 1228 villages that were destroyed around Kirkuk, and also noted that there are no Kurdish judges on the Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC) Judiciary Committee in Baghdad. (Note: the IPCC was recently renamed the Commission for Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD). The new Head of the CRRPD, Kamal Jamal, told IPAO on 25 June that the two Kurdish judges refuse to assume their appointments in Baghdad due to security concerns. End Note.) Kirkuki also alleged that currently only 40 percent of Kirkuk remains outside KRG administration.

(C) BAGHDAD NOT SERIOUS ABOUT ARTICLE 140

13. (C) The Kurdish leaders claim inaction on the part of previous administrations on the Kirkuk issue is feeding anxiety among the Kurdish people and is contributing to a growing belief that Baghdad has never intended to follow through with the normalization process. According to the attending Kurdish parties, an act of good faith is necessary to regain the confidence of the Kurdish public. As a first step, all present requested that Baghdad allot a budget to address Art. 140 and establish adequate relations with the Kirkuk Normalization Committee.

(C) ARTICLE 140 THE KEY TO IRAQ UNITY

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14. (C) Kirkuki stated that all Iraqis voted for Art. 140, which means this is a national agreement and a cornerstone of Iraqi unity. He further asserted that resettled Arabs must return to where they came from to protect the unity of Iraq, claiming that past injustices prohibited these Arabs and returning Kurds from living together. According to all the committee members, the Kurdish public views implementation of Art. 140 as a test of Baghdad's intentions to respect the federal constitution.

(C) NORMALIZATION MUST PRECEDE KIRKUK CENSUS

15. (C) Kirkuki stated that a census must wait until normalization of Kirkuk is complete, all IDPs are resettled, those Arabs brought to Kirkuk under Saddam are returned to their places of origin, and geographic districts that Saddam separated from Kirkuk, such as Chamchamal, are reincorporated into Kirkuk Province. Kirkuki alleged that there is a petition circulating in Kirkuk to garner signatures of Arabs willing to leave and claimed that more than 7000 Arab families, or 75,000 persons, have expressed a desire to return to their original locations.

(U) COMMENT

¶6. (C) Taking preemptive action on Art. 140 represents a recurrent Kurdish strategy, in this case trumping any national constitutional debate on the subject, while forcing into place a timeline to prepare for a referendum on Kirkuk's final status. The KIU and KIG representatives were strident in their emphasis of the IDP issue, which could indicate their intent to build a support base among IDP communities. This potentially would increase their profile during the upcoming provincial elections and the referendum on Kirkuk.
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